Springboards

I'm often asked by students, "*How can I find my way around the fret board more quickly?*"

When watching a great guitarist, they often times, make it look effortless or even impossible. Without knowing the tricks it seems like magic. But alas, it's knowledge and VERY attainable. Let me emphasize that these are learned skills. Sometimes I'm also asked why one would even care to know the notes on the fret board.

Some players may never desire to know such things, or what they play does not require them to know it as readily. But what they don't know CAN hinder their playing.

Don't misunderstand what I'm trying to convey. You might go your whole life and play in a band and NOT know the notes on the fret board. However, in certain (and many) settings, if you don't have that knowledge, you are going to look pretty silly NOT being able to play something that is required of you.

Let's say, I walk into a studio and the producer hands me a chart that is in the key of C - I sure better know where a C is! If I don't, I'm going to have problem playing a solo or improvising in any way. So the short of it is, knowledge is power and since you are smart enough to be filling your head by reading this, I trust you are someone that wants to excel and are ready for the challenge.

When it comes to knowing your fret board, there are a myriad of techniques that you can use to determine which note they are playing at any given point in a song. Below are two diagrams I refer to as "springboards", which are great tools to enable you to know exactly where you are on the fret board.

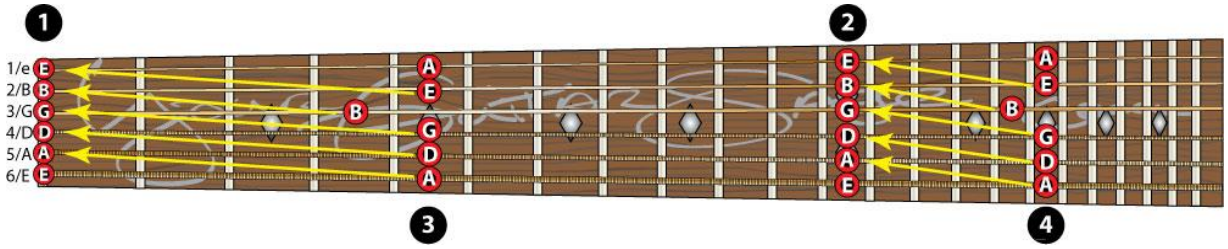
Stationary Springboards Diagram

1. Know the names of your open strings E, A, D, G, B and E. Also, remember where your root notes are for all your open chords - E, A, D, C, G etc.

2. Know the octaves of your open strings which are at the 12th fret and those open chord roots which are exactly 12 frets higher than their originals. So there your E, A, D, G, B & E are again.

3. Remember how we learned to tune the guitar to itself using that 5th/4th fret technique? Well, since you know that already you have another springboard

4. 12 frets up from the notes found on that tuning technique will give you yet another springboard location.



Movable Springboards Diagram

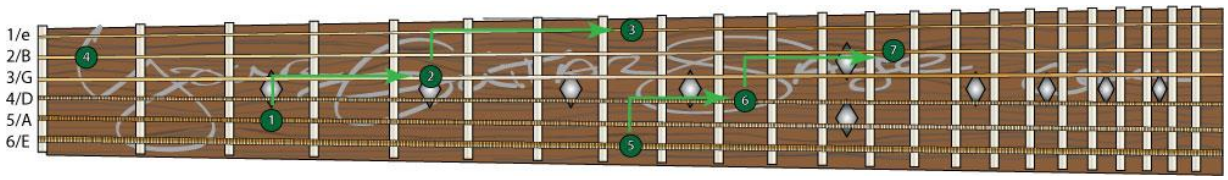
All the numbered dots are "C" notes.

1. *Notice numbers 1 and 5. They are strings E and A. ANY note on those strings will have an octave available down 2 strings and UP 2 frets as denoted by numbers 2 and 6. So 2 goes with 1 and 6 goes with 5. Get it?*

2. *Now notice numbers 2 and 6. These are on strings D and G. ANY note on those strings will have an octave available down 2 strings and up 3 frets as denoted by numbers 3 and 7. So 3 goes with 2 and 7 goes with 6. See, now you are getting it!*

3. *Now check out numbers 3 and 5. I use this one a lot, too. Since these are both on E strings (high and low), they will always be mirror images.*

4. *You could also associate, for instance, 1 and 4 or 5 and 2, etc., but the others are more apparent. The more you know, the better a guitarist/musician you become.*


1/e
2/B
3/G
4/D
5/A
6/E
4
1
2
3
5
6
7